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ABSTRACT

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 included a component focusing on programs for displaced homemakers and single parents. This part of the legislation was precipitated by the following statistics: almost half of all families maintained by single women had incomes below the poverty line; the number of displaced homemakers and single women heading families was very large and growing rapidly; and births to unmarried teens were increasing astronomically. The Perkins Act legislation provided for vocational education and training and expanded services for displaced homemakers and single parents. In Ohio, funds from the program were set aside to expand displaced homemaker and single parent programs, to fund a grant program for tuition and support services for single parents and homemakers through existing delivery systems, and to fund an accountability system, curriculum development outreach, research, and inservice programs related to single parent and homemaker programs and projects. Almost all program participants were female, living in poverty with one or more young children. Participants enrolled in vocational training and then received support services to allow them to participate. A total of $14.1 million was granted to the Ohio projects during fiscal years 1986 through 1991, resulting in 90-152 functioning projects during any one year. Services were provided to more than 17,000 participants, with most of those receiving both occupational training and support services. Average cost per participant was $536. The programs also helped improve the employment prospects and high school graduation rates of participants and reduced reliance on public assistance. (KC)

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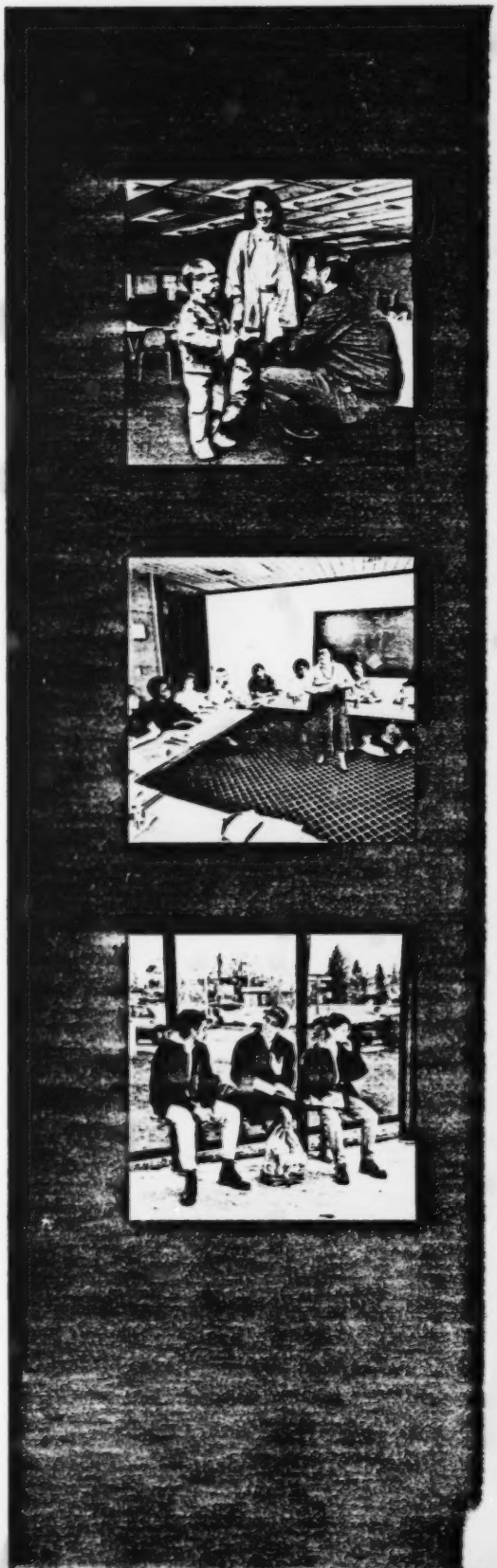
# SINGLE PARENTS AND DISPLACED HOMEMAKERS

# A NATIONAL PROBLEM AND CONCERN

# OHIO'S RESPONSE



A REPORT ON THE CARL D. PERKINS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT, 1986 - 1991

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## A NATIONAL PROBLEM

National attention in the early 1980's focused on the increasing number of poor, single parent families. Evidence grew that reflected the disturbing status of single parents and homemakers. Statistics affirmed the phrase "feminization of poverty" as one based on facts.

Teen and adult single parents and displaced homemakers were identified as at-risk populations. Lacking adequate or updated education and training and having little or no work experience, women often found themselves immobilized by low self-esteem, high levels of stress, many home-related problems, and very limited financial resources.

***Statistics affirmed the phrase "feminization of poverty" as being based on facts.***

Federal legislators recognized that these women's plight had implications not only for our nation's social and educational institutions, but also for our economy and work force.

### NATIONAL STATISTICS LEADING TO 1984 LEGISLATION *

- Women who were divorced, separated, widowed, or single (1984) supported 10.3 million families.
- Almost half of all families maintained by single women had an income below the poverty line (1980).
- Families maintained by never-married mothers increased 500% from 1970 to 1984.
- Fifty percent of teens who had a baby before age 18 would never receive a high school diploma.
- Women on welfare comprised the second largest group of chronically jobless people.

### STATISTICS IN OHIO *

Similar statistics were seen in Ohio. The 1980 U.S. Census and other governmental studies reported the following:

- 554,177 displaced homemakers resided in Ohio.
- Ohio ranked 7th highest of the states in its number of displaced homemakers.
- Nearly 2 out of 3 poor adults in Ohio were women.
- Fifty-seven percent of births were to unmarried teens.
- Births to unmarried women increased from 10% to 20% of total Ohio births from 1970 to 1984.

***It was recognized that the plight of these low-income families had implications not only for our nation's social and educational institutions but also for our economy and work force.***

## THE NATION RESPONDS: GOALS ESTABLISHED

In 1984, federal legislation supporting vocational education was reauthorized in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (Public Law 98-524). The Perkins Act focused strongly on adult learners and their need for training, retraining, and employment development. Title II, Part A, targeted funds for single parents and homemakers with emphasis on displaced homemakers to help them obtain marketable skills.

Section 201 (f) states that Each state may only use the portion of its allotment available for this part to:

- provide, subsidize, reimburse or pay for vocational education and training activities, including basic literacy instruction and necessary educational materials that will furnish single parents and displaced homemakers with marketable skills;
- make grants to eligible recipients for expanding vocational education services.....for providing single parents and displaced homemakers with marketable skills;
- make grants to community-based organizations for the provision of vocational education services to single parents and displaced homemakers...;



* *Statistics compiled from U.S. Census; National Displaced Homemakers Network; and U.S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau.*

- make vocational education and training more accessible to single parents and displaced homemakers by assisting them with child care or transportation services or by organizing and scheduling the programs so that they are more accessible; or

***The Perkins Act recognized that in order for single parents and displaced homemakers to succeed in vocational education, many needed special support services.***

- provide information to single parents and displaced homemakers to inform them of vocational education programs and related support services."

The Perkins Act recognized that in order for women to succeed in vocational education, many needed special support services and consideration for scheduling difficulties. To meet the goals of the Perkins Act, funding was allocated for child care, travel reimbursement, and other support services to meet the needs of this targeted population.

# OHIO'S INITIATIVE: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

When the Perkins Act was enacted in 1984, the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Career Education, had programs in operation designed to assist single parents and displaced homemakers. There were three adult programs---Displaced Homemaker; Graduation, Occupations, and Living Skills (GOALS); and Family Life Education---and one secondary program called Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills (GRADS).

Ohio's Perkins 7% set-aside funds for single parents and homemakers were designated to:

- Expand the Displaced Homemaker and GOALS programs
- Fund a grant program for tuition and support services for single parents and homemakers through existing delivery systems
- Fund the accountability system, curriculum development, outreach, research, and inservice programs related to the Single Parent and Homemaker programs and projects

## *Single Parent and Displaced Homemaker Programs (SPH)*

Each of these programs helped participants improve their personal living situation, reduce barriers to education and employment, and acquire marketable skills. Customized to meet the needs of the specific single-parent and homemaker population it served, each program's goals focused on helping participants develop the confidence level, knowledge base, and decision-making skills needed to support themselves and their families. The core curriculum areas were

- Personal development
- Career exploration
- Employability
- Resource management
- Parenting skills (except in Displaced Homemaker program)

*Tuition dollars from this act enabled displaced homemakers to attend vocational education programs and to receive related support services.*

**Displaced Homemaker.** This program helped low-income displaced homemakers, single parents, and homemakers to make the transition from homemaking to wage earning. The program provided supportive instruction and services to help participants cope with new life situations, overcome barriers that prevent them from becoming independent, and acquire marketable skills. Funding was provided by federal and state dollars.

**GOALS (Graduation, Occupations, and Living Skills)** This program served single parents and homemakers between the ages of 16 and 30 who have dropped out of school. GOALS helped the students obtain a G.E.D. (General Education Diploma), attain an employable job skill, become economically independent and function as a responsible parent and citizen.

*Child-care support services made secondary and adult vocational education and training more accessible to single parents and homemakers.*

***Each of these programs helped participants improve their personal living situations, reduce barriers to education and employment, and acquire marketable skills.***

## *Single Parent and Displaced Homemaker Project Grants*

The SPH project grants permitted vocational education planning districts (VEPDs) that offered vocational education programs targeted to serve single parents and homemakers to apply for the SPH grant. Also, community or technical colleges that offered a Displaced Homemaker program funded by the Board of Regents were eligible to apply. The SPH project grants helped participants acquire marketable skills and were also designed to recognize and confront the special barriers to education and employment that existed.

1. **Project I-OT:** Occupational Training Grants provided tuition support and instructional materials for single parents and homemakers enrolled in adult occupational training programs funded by the Ohio Department of Education, Division of Vocational and Career Education.

2. **Project II-SS:** Child Care, Transportation, and Support Services made secondary and adult vocational education and training more accessible to single parents and homemakers. Support services options included

   a. school-based child care

   b. contract-based child care with licensed child-care providers in the community

   c. child-care allowances provided for single parents and homemakers to purchase child-care services

   d. travel support provided to secondary and adult students for travel to and from child-care sites and/or vocational programs

Child care and travel support services were available to secondary or adult students enrolled in a vocational education program identified with the greatest financial need.

3. **Project III-IM:** Instructional materials were provided to support vocational education programs for single parents and homemakers.

4. **Project IV-IP** Innovative projects helped single parents and homemakers reduce barriers to employment, to obtain marketable skills, and/or enter nontraditional employment and/or employment in new, emerging, or technical occupational areas.

## *Student Eligibility*

The Perkins Act of 1984 defined the population to be served. All recipients of services were to meet one of the following definitions:

**Single Parent:** an individual who is unmarried or legally separated from a spouse, and has a minor child or children for which the parent has either custody or joint custody, or is pregnant

**Homemaker:** an individual who is an adult and has worked as an adult primarily without remuneration to care for the home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills

**Displaced Homemaker:** an individual who because of divorce, separation, or the death or disability of a spouse must prepare for paid employment

Priority was placed on service to single parents and homemakers with the greatest financial need and to displaced homemakers.

# HISTORY OF OUTCOMES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Fiscal years 1986–1991

### *Profile of Participants*

Most participants receiving services under these grants were referred by agencies in the community. They were identified as being at high risk of remaining unemployed or underemployed. Each applicant was interviewed, and detailed statistical data were established and maintained. A typical profile of recipients emerged:

SECONDARY PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Female | 98.9% |
| Living in poverty | 76.4% |
| 14 to 17 years old | 73.1% |
| White | 52.9% |
| Black | 44.6% |
| Parent of minor children: | |
| 1 child | 91.8% |
| 2 or more children | 8.2% |
| Child younger than 24 months | 87.4% |

ADULT PARTICIPANTS

| | |
|---|---|
| Female | 98.1% |
| Living in poverty | 79.3% |
| 18 to 30 years old | 47.4% |
| 31 to 45 years old | 35.1% |
| White | 75.5% |
| Black | 21.4% |
| Parent of minor children: | |
| 1 child | 35.9% |
| 2 or more children | 51.0% |
| High school graduate or completer of G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) | 78.2% |

As a result of the holistic approach of the SPH project grants, many single parents and displaced homemakers were served by more than one grant. It was common for grant recipients to be enrolled in a special program and concurrently receive support services to ensure their ability to attend and complete vocational training.

The typical adult participant was enrolled in a Displaced Homemaker or GOALS program and received support services (child care and transportation) while enrolled. The program participant then entered a vocational training program (and continued to receive support services and perhaps tuition as well) to gain the skills necessary for employment.

The typical secondary participant was concurrently enrolled in the GRADS program and in a vocational training program. The secondary students typically received support services (child care) and any instructional materials necessary for enrollment in a vocational training program.

### *Funded Projects and Sites*

Many of the participants who enrolled in Displaced Homemaker and GOALS programs received occupational training and support services. A total of $14,100,141 was granted during FY86 through FY91. The lowest amount, granted in 1990, was $1,600,423. The highest amount, $3,334,737, was granted in 1989.

The greatest number of projects granted was 152 in 1989; the lowest was 90, which occurred in 1986.

Refer to Table 1 for more detailed data on the amount of dollars distributed in each category and the number of projects and sites at which these dollars were utilized. It should be noted that the total number of sites grew from a low of 31 in FY 86 to 77 in FY 91. This steady increase of sites occurred in spite of a decrease in federal dollars, indicating an efficient use of funding and management of services at the state and local levels.

TABLE 1 SINGLE PARENT AND HOMEMAKER PROJECT GRANTS

| PROJECT | FY 1991 | FY 1990 | FY 1989 | FY 1988 | FY 1987 | FY 1986 | TOTALS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupational Training | $ 561,907 | $ 515,580 | $ 1,044,590 | $ 1,019,628 | $ 887,163 | $ 644,821 | $ 4,673,687 |
| Support Services | 1,334,382 | 1,025,762 | 2,144,432 | 2,043,692 | 1,072,909 | 871,693 | 8,492,970 |
| Instructional Materials | 55,580 | 23,407 | 53,365 | 51,164 | 49,800 | 34,000 | 267,316 |
| Innovative Projects | 31,163 | 35,674 | 92,350 | 161,414 | 184,979 | 160,686 | 666,266 |
| TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED | $ 1,983,032 | $ 1,600,423 | $ 3,334,737 | $ 3,275,898 | $ 2,194,851 | $ 1,711,200 | $ 14,100,239 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS AWARDED | 142 | 124 | 152 | 138 | 115 | 90 | |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF SITES SERVED | 77 | 67 | 66 | 65 | 55 | 31 | |

## *Number of Parents and Children Served*

Table 2 summarizes the parents and children who received services and/or training. The number of participants served increased until FY90, when a decrease was seen in numbers as well as in dollars.

In FY90, SPH funds decreased by 52%, but the number of participants served decreased by only 39.7%. A number of factors contributed to this, including increased program efficiency, greater use of local dollars, and possibly lower number of disadvantaged individuals served.

**TABLE 2 - SUMMARY OF SERVICES RECEIVED BY SPH PARTICIPANTS**

NUMBER OF ADULTS RECEIVING OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING SERVICES

| Fiscal Year | |
|---|---|
| 1991 | 1,362 |
| 1990 | 1,208 |
| 1989 | 1,861 |
| 1988 | 1,875 |
| 1987 | 1,445 |
| 1986 | 961 |

NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

| Fiscal Year | |
|---|---|
| 1991 | 1,799 |
| 1990 | 1,583 |
| 1989 | 3,294 |
| 1988 | 2,933 |
| 1987 | 1,613 |
| 1986 | 852 |

NUMBER OF PARENTS WHO RECEIVED SUPPORT SERVICES (CHILD CARE AND/OR TRAVEL)

| Fiscal Year | Adult | Secondary | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 1,106 | 883 | 1,989 |
| 1990 | 973 | 843 | 1,816 |
| 1989 | 1,701 | 1,389 | 3,090 |
| 1988 | 1,644 | 1,135 | 2,779 |
| 1987 | 858* | 570 | 1,428 |
| 1986 | 736* | 286 | 1,022 |

*Calculated; reporting system refined in FY 1988.

TOTAL NUMBER SERVED (OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES)

| Fiscal Year | |
|---|---|
| 1991 | 2,960 |
| 1990 | 2,739 |
| 1989 | 4,258 |
| 1988 | 3,878 |
| 1987 | 2,899 |
| 1986 | 1,385 |

***Over the six-year period, $4,673,689 was invested in occupational training for 8,712 single parents and homemakers at an average cost per participant of $536.46.***

*Transportation assistance helps parents attend classes.*

## *Barriers to Employment and Education*

Data that was maintained based on intake interviews with participants remained dramatically consistent from FY86 through FY91 on the primary barriers to graduation and employment. The top three barriers for students were as follows:

ADULT STUDENTS
1. Lack of money
2. Lack of skills/diploma
3. Child care

SECONDARY STUDENTS
1. Child care
2. Lack of money
3. Lack of transportation

It was apparent from this data that money invested in occupational training for adults and support services for both secondary and adult students would target their greatest perceived barriers.

Table 3 reflects the cost per single parent or homemaker to provide these critical support services. For approximately $700 per family, support was provided that helped adults become employed and secondary students remain in school.

**TABLE 3 - SUPPORT SERVICES - COST PER FAMILY**

| | FY 1991 | FY 1990 | FY 1989 | FY 1988 | FY 1987 | FY 1986 | TOTALS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total $ Spent on Support Services | $ 1,334,382.00 | $ 1,025,762.00 | $ 2,144,432.00 | $ 2,043,692.00 | $ 1,072,909.00 | $ 871,693.00 | $ 8,492,870.00 |
| Total # Families Served | 1,989 | 1,816 | 3,090 | 2,779 | 1,428 | 1,022 | 12,124 |
| Investment Per Family | $ 670.88 | $ 564.84 | $ 693.99 | $ 735.40 | $ 751.33 | $ 852.92 | $ 700.50* |

*Six-year average investment per family for support services

### *Adult Recipients Show Significant Gains in Employment*

With adults indicating a lack of skills and education level [attained] being a primary inhibitor to employment, investing in occupational training should result in a reduction of unemployment. If adults on public assistance become employed, thus generating revenue instead of using it, training becomes extremely cost-effective. What has been the history with SPH? Over the six-year period, $4,673,689 was invested in occupational training for 8,712 single parents and homemakers at an average cost per participant of $536.46. Table 4 indicates that completers of occupational training programs reported significant gains in employment of 20 hours or more per week for FY88 through FY91. Gains were reported even during the economic recession of FY91, in which many segments of the working population were dealing with unemployment.

***When adults on public assistance become employed, thus generating revenue rather than using it, training becomes extremely cost-effective.***

**TABLE 4: CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM COMPLETERS**

| Fiscal Year | Not Employed at Intake (all adults) | Employed Occupational Completers |
|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 76.5% | 55.5% |
| 1990 | 74.7% | 64.0% |
| 1989 | 77.9% | 57.3% |
| 1988 | 78.4% | 60.3% |

Furthermore, this chart reflects neither the 4.6% of the occupational program completers in FY91 nor the 7.3% of the completers in FY90 who pursued additional training that should result in employment at its completion.

### *Secondary Recipients Increase Attendance and Graduation Rates*

Alarming statistics indicate that over one half of all students who become parents while in high school will drop out and not receive their high school diploma.

A dramatic reversal in these grim statistics has been seen in Ohio. The GRADS program, developed in Ohio and nationally recognized and replicated, has had great success in reversing these statistics. Students who enrolled in this educationally supportive program and received critical child-care support from SPH grants had a very different picture of educational progress. In FY91, 87% of all secondary SPH participants graduated, were promoted or were still enrolled in school at the school year's end. Success rates were similar for prior years:

***A dramatic reversal in the grim dropout statistics has been seen in Ohio.***

| | |
|---|---|
| FY 90 | 90.6% |
| FY 89 | 88.0% |
| FY 88 | 90.6% |
| FY 87 | 89.1% |
| FY 86 | 90.6% |

Although keeping secondary students in school to graduation may not generate the immediate societal dividends seen in moving adults from public assistance to employment, the long-term savings to society and its families will still be immense.

## GOALS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE 1990's

### *The New Federal Law and Its Implications for Change*

New statistics on the single parents and displaced homemakers continued to show a need for programs and services. Specifically, one out of four families is headed by a single parent, and that single parent is almost always female. The number of displaced homemakers increased 17% in the past decade, and now number over 650,000. Of those growing ranks of displaced homemakers, two-thirds are widows, two-thirds are unemployed or underemployed, one in four is a woman of color, and four in ten live in poverty. *

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act Amendments of 1990 were passed and became effective July 1, 1991. The new legislation recognized the significant accomplishments made under the 1984 act but also created new and more challenging goals for states to meet. The mission was to "make the United States more competitive in the world economy by developing more fully the academic and occupational skill of all segments of the population."

The focus of the 1990 act remained consistent with that of the 1984 act by continuing the set-aside funds for programs serving single parents, displaced homemakers, and single pregnant women. The redefined target populations were "displaced homemakers" (rather than "homemakers") and "single pregnant women."

At the state level, legislative changes were also occurring with Senate Bill 140, which went into effect on

* *Statistics compiled from National Displaced Homemakers Network.*

July 1, 1990. The legislation challenged the Division of Vocational and Career Education to "accelerate the modernization of the vocational curriculum....which can furnish students with the...skills needed to participate successfully in the work force of the future."

A major goal in the publication *Ohio's Future at Work* was that "all vocational programs and services will have specified, measurable, and challenging outcomes to evaluate student performance, to facilitate continued program improvement, and to maximize opportunities for success in the technologically oriented workplace and in continued education."

## *Ohio's Response to the 1990 Act*

In light of these legislative changes, Ohio implemented some initiatives that will benefit single parents, displaced homemakers, and single pregnant women by ensuring equitable educational practices and providing services and resources for effective recruitment into higher-wage training programs. Some of these recent efforts are:

1. Hands-on workshops for all GRADS, GOALS, DH (Displaced Homemakers), and CSS (Comprehensive Support Services) coordinators regarding nontraditional occupations
2. Statewide inservice education regarding equity issues
3. Equity Resource Library, housed at the Center on Education and Training for Employment, on equity, single parent, and displaced homemaker issues
4. Equity competencies established for all K-12 and adult learners
5. Ongoing technical assistance and site visits to ensure effective programming for the target populations

Core outcomes and measures of performance for all Equity, Single Parent, and Displaced Homemaker programs were established by the fall of 1992. These outcomes and measures of performance not only integrated new requirements of the 1990 Perkins Act but also incorporated additional recommendations identified by the state of Ohio for program improvement. Although core outcomes and measures of performance have been developed specific to each program, they incorporate some general goals, which are:

1. Increased graduation rates
2. Increased enrollment in vocational training programs
3. Improved employment rates
4. Increased rates of earning
5. Increased enrollment in non-traditional training
6. Reduced reliance on public assistance

These objectives present major challenges for programs that work exclusively with disadvantaged and difficult-to-place participants.

***"Thus, the 1980's ended with a new wave of education reform based on rising expectations and increased demands."***

Franklin B. Walter, former Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated in *Ohio's Future at Work*:

"Thus, the 1980's--a decade of introspection, challenge, and change for educators--ended with a new wave of education reform based on rising expectations and increased demands. The charge to Ohio's vocational education system and its leadership in the 1990's is direct, compelling, and far-reaching."

*Ohio's Future at Work* also stated that "there is growing realization that people are our state's most valuable resource... each and every Ohioan must be capacitated and committed to become a functioning, contributing member of society."

The charge for change and improvement and more efficient and effective use of diminishing resources is clear from the 1990 Perkins Act as well as from state legislative mandates. Programs will continue to be evaluated, data collected, and support maintained for those programs that best meet the challenge of this charge.

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